



# Department of Justice

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2008  
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CRM  
(202) 514-2007  
TDD (202) 514-1888

## **CIVILIAN CONTRACTOR CHARGED WITH SECOND DEGREE MURDER**

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – Don Michael Ayala, a civilian contractor stationed in Afghanistan, has been charged with second degree murder in the death of Abdul Salam while on patrol in Chehel Gazi, Afghanistan, on Nov. 4, 2008, announced Acting Assistant Attorney General Matthew Friedrich and Acting U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia Dana J. Boente.

According to a complaint filed today in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia in Alexandria, Va., Salam had ignited a flammable liquid that he had thrown on Ayala's civilian contractor team mate resulting in second and third degree burns over sixty percent of her body. The complaint alleges that Ayala and U.S. soldiers had restrained Salam, but when Ayala was informed of his team mate's condition, he killed Salam by firing a single round into Salam's head. Ayala is currently in Afghanistan pending a removal hearing to authorize his transfer to the United States.

This case is being investigated by the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael E. Rich and Trial Attorney Christopher Graveline of the Criminal Division's Domestic Security Section at the U.S. Department of Justice.

The public is reminded that the charges in a criminal complaint are mere allegations and that defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

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